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Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session (see E/2008/24), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, which is submitted to the Commission for informational purposes. The report describes the activities of the Oslo Group in 2007-2008, including the main findings of the second and third meetings, the launching of the new interactive website, the drafting of the revised and updated international recommendations for energy statistics and the future activities of the Group. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

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Report of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

Contents

		Page
I.	Background	3
II.	Activities of the Oslo Group in 2007 and 2008	3
	A. Meetings of the Oslo Group	3
	B. Launching of the new, interactive website	3
	C. Best practices	4
	D. International recommendations for energy statistics and *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*	4
III.	Coordination with other groups	4
IV.	Future activities of the Oslo Group	5
	A. Preparation of the international recommendations for energy statistics and the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*	5
	B. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics	6
	C. International Workshop on Energy Statistics	6
	D. Fourth meeting of the Oslo Group	6
Annexes		
I.	Mandate of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics	7
II.	Members of the Oslo Group	8

I. Background

1. The Oslo Group on Energy Statistics was established by the Statistical Commission in 2005 on the basis of the issues discussed in the report of the programme reviewer (Statistics Norway) on energy statistics.[1] The mandate of the Oslo Group is contained in Annex I. The main objective of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics is to build a coherent, multipurpose system for official energy statistics to monitor the yearly supply and use of energy in a country and to address all user needs.

II. Activities of the Oslo Group in 2007 and 2008

A. Meetings of the Oslo Group

2. The second meeting of the Group, hosted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of India, was held in New Delhi from 5 to 7 February 2007. The main focus of the meeting was the revision of the United Nations manuals on energy statistics. A draft outline was discussed, and a list of issues for 2007 was established as a work programme related to the revision. The meeting also focused on the scope of official energy statistics, links and bridges to international standard concepts and classifications in economic and environmental statistics, cooperation and relations in the context of other manuals or handbooks on energy statistics, and best practices.

3. The third meeting of the Oslo Group, hosted by Statistics Austria, was held in Vienna from 4 to 6 February 2008. The meeting focused on the work done on the revision of the United Nations manuals on energy statistics. All the issues addressed in 2007 were taken up at the meeting. The scope of official energy statistics was discussed, and the guiding principles for the preparation of the international recommendations for energy statistics were drawn up. The meeting also focused on cooperation with other groups and on the collection of national and international best practices.

B. Launching of the new, interactive website

4. To secure communication within the Oslo Group between meetings, a website and discussion forum was set up. The forum was launched in August 2006 and reorganized in February 2007, after the second meeting, in accordance with the list of issues for 2007. The forum was open to all to read, but only registered members of the Oslo Group could make written contributions. Following evaluation of the forum early in 2008, it was concluded that it functioned not so much as a discussion site, but more as a noticeboard where papers were presented.

5. After the meeting held in Vienna in February 2008, a new, combined website and discussion forum was set up to replace the previous website and forum. The new site, launched in September 2008, is set up to support the preparation of the international recommendations for energy statistics and the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*. The goal is for all communication and discussions on the issue

[1] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2005.htm; E/CN.3/2005/3.

papers and on chapters of the new manuals to take place on this new website. When a paper is ready for discussion, it will be made available on the forum, to which all comments must be addressed. The aim is to ensure an open discussion on the topics in question. The site (available at http://og.ssb.no/) is located at Statistics Norway. When the new, interactive website was launched, the old website and discussion forum were shut down.

C. Best practices

6. The identification and collection of national and international best practices in the area of energy statistics is included in the mandate of the Oslo Group. In that connection, a template for best practices has been developed and is accessible through the Oslo Group website.

D. International recommendations for energy statistics and *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*

7. The main activity of the Oslo Group in 2008 was related to the revision of the United Nations manuals on energy statistics. The Group endorsed the proposal of the United Nations Statistics Division for the preparation of the revised and updated international recommendations for energy statistics and a follow-up publication, the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*, to assist countries in the implementation of the recommendations. The principles and set-up of the recommendations and the list of issues related to the latter and to the *Manual* will be presented to the Commission by the United Nations Statistics Division, as the coordinator and editor of both documents. The Oslo Group, in cooperation with the Statistics Division, prepared an amended outline for the recommendations, compiled a list of issues for global consultation and placed them on the Group forum for discussion and finalization. In September 2008, a finalized drafting schedule for the recommendations and a list of issues for 2008 were placed on the Group's website (http://og.ssb.no/). Further details are contained in the report of the United Nations Statistics Division on the international recommendations on energy statistics.

III. Coordination with other groups

London Group

8. Representatives of the London Group have attended the meetings of the Oslo Group, and vice versa. The Chairs of the two groups are working closely together on coordination in order to prevent misunderstandings and duplication of work. Topics dealt with by the London Group, which are closely related to the work of the Oslo Group, include issues concerning assets and reserves, and the Group focuses on defining user needs in the field of environmental and economic accounting related to energy statistics.

Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

9. The Chair of the Oslo Group participates in the meetings of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting. At the meeting of the Committee

held in June 2008, the Oslo Group submitted a progress report on its work and delivered a presentation on the main issues with respect to concepts and the use of terminology.[2] The document illustrates the differences in the use of terminology among various international bodies and between energy statistics and environmental statistics.

Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

10. The Chair and the secretariat of the Oslo Group also attend the meetings of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics, which is working towards common definitions, units and conversion factors in the area of energy among international organizations. At the second meeting of the Working Group, in November 2007, the Oslo Group made a presentation on the status of its work, in particular as concerns the revision of the United Nations manuals on energy statistics. The importance of cooperation and harmonization was emphasized and the Working Group engaged a consultant charged with proposing common international definitions on energy products.

11. The consultant's draft on international definitions was distributed prior to the third meeting of the Working Group, in October 2008. The Oslo Group secretariat submitted comments on the draft and participated in the meeting. The organizations agreed on the text of most of the definitions put forward at the meeting. Further information on the process of the harmonization of definitions is available in the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics (E/CN.3/2007/21).

Other groups

12. The Oslo Group has also made presentations to several working groups, inter alia, at meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; and the Statistical Office of the European Commission (working group on sustainable development, in Oslo in November 2006, and Energy Statistics Committee, in June 2007).

IV. Future activities of the Oslo Group

13. The Commission may wish to take note of the following.

A. Preparation of the international recommendations for energy statistics and the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*

14. The main activity in 2009 and 2010 will be the revision and updating of the recommendations for energy statistics and the identification of the issues to be addressed in the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*. These efforts will continue according to the drafting schedule and timetable presented by the United Nations Statistics Division.

[2] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/meetings/lod3.htm.

B. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

15. The process of the harmonization of definitions will continue following the meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics in October 2008. The secretariat of the Oslo Group will participate in the process and in the meetings of the Working Group to be held in 2009.

C. International Workshop on Energy Statistics

16. The Oslo Group Chair and secretariat will attend the International Workshop on Energy Statistics, organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, to be held in Mexico in December 2008. The workshop is part of the process of drafting the international recommendations, and details of the meeting will be provided by the Statistics Division.

D. Fourth meeting of the Oslo Group

17. The fourth meeting of the Oslo Group will be held in Ottawa in February 2009 and will be hosted by Statistics Canada. The meeting will be dedicated to reviewing the draft recommendations and will focus also on the issues to be addressed in the *Energy Statistics Compilers Manual*, as well as on cooperation with other groups and the collection of national and international best practices.

Annex I

Mandate of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics[a]

The Oslo Group on Energy Statistics was formed to address issues related to energy statistics and to contribute to improved international standards and improved methods for official energy statistics by pooling expertise in the energy community. The Group will undertake the following actions: (a) identify users' needs; (b) define the scope of official energy statistics; (c) identify and collect national and international best practices; (d) review and contribute to the updating of the United Nations handbooks and manuals on energy statistics; (e) identify gaps in coverage (e.g., fuel types, flows) and develop methodologies to cover them; (f) adopt links or develop bridges to international standard concepts and classifications in economic/environmental statistics to facilitate the integration and interface of energy statistics with other statistical systems; and (g) recommend a core set of tables as minimum requirements at the national and international levels to satisfy major users' needs.

[a] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2006.htm; E/CN.3/2006/10.

Annex II

Members of the Oslo Group

A total of 21 countries and five international organizations attended the first three meetings of the Oslo Group and expressed their interest in participating in the work of the Group.

Countries

Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yemen

Organizations

The Statistical Office of the European Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Energy Agency, the International Monetary Fund (statistical departments) and the United Nations Statistics Division

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